

## Department of State- Embassy Kabul

<b>Program Office:</b>	Embassy Kabul, Public Affairs Section
<b>Funding Opportunity Title:</b>	Afghan MoHRA Capacity Development
<b>Announcement Type:</b>	Cooperative Agreement
<b>Funding Opportunity Number:</b>	SCAKAB-11-AW-04-SCA-040511
<b>Deadline for Applications:</b>	<b>May 17, 2011 (extended deadline)</b>
<b>CFDA</b>	19.501

### FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan (PAS Kabul) announces an open competition for a cooperation agreement to provide a program of capacity building to the Afghan Ministry of Haj and Religious Affairs (MoHRA). The project should be comprised of three components: developing MoHRA's human resources, providing expert-level advisory assistance to the Minister and other senior officials, and infrastructure improvements. The capacity enhancement for MoHRA - the only Government institution responsible for communicating and engaging with religious leaders – will allow the Ministry to be more effective in responding to insurgency falsehoods and propaganda through initiatives, such as provision and dissemination of publications, holding education seminars and functions. The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

### ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility is limited to:

- Nonprofits that do not have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, that are an NGO/PVO headquartered in Afghanistan.
- Commercial firms headquartered in Afghanistan – profit is not allowed under any grant award issued by US Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section.

The Department encourages organizations that have not previously received international program funding from the U.S government to apply under this announcement. New applicants must demonstrate expertise in human and institutional capacity development. Expertise and established relationships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and/or local officials in Afghanistan will be considered favorably.

Cost Sharing or Matching: This program does not require cost sharing.

Other Special Eligibility Criteria: Not Applicable.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact M. Y. Roshan, Senior Traditional Engagements Officer, PAS Kabul, at: Email: [RoshanMY@state.gov](mailto:RoshanMY@state.gov) (*Preferred method of communication*); Phone: +93-(0)700108999, ext. 7940

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## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

PAS Kabul invites Afghan non-profit/non-governmental organizations and companies to submit proposals to coordinate a capacity development program for Afghanistan's MoHRA, acting in coordination with PAS Kabul under a cooperative agreement. MoHRA is a key and critical government institution in the effort to counter violent extremism throughout Afghanistan and improve the Afghan government's ability to communicate with all members of Afghan society. The Ministry is charged with spreading messages of moderation, peace, and tolerance through its network of religious leaders and scholars. Ministerial capacity, however, is not currently up to the task, and MoHRA has requested support to help it develop institutionally.

To provide such support, the Recipient shall possess technical expertise and experience in human and institutional capacity development both in the areas of religious tolerance and organizational development on the ministerial scale. The Recipient shall work closely with MoHRA to conduct a needs assessment aimed at overhauling functional capacity at the Ministry, and with the focus on the three key components envisioned for the project. Central to this cooperative agreement will be close consultation between the Recipient and PAS Kabul in the development of the capacity building program. Each party will have specific obligations and responsibilities under the terms of the cooperative agreement. Input and approval from PAS Kabul will be required prior to implementation of a work plan, and Kabul PAS will remain closely involved in a formal advisory capacity throughout the course of the project. The expected period of performance is 16 months.

Three components are envisioned for this capacity building program: 1) developing MoHRA's human resources through educational courses on a wide range of issues – financial management, English, computers, business administration, etc.; 2) providing expert-level advisory assistance to the Minister and other senior officials, both in areas of religious scholarship and the administration of human and technical resources; 3) infrastructure improvements to MoHRA's offices in Kabul.

### **Administration and National Policy Perspective**

The U.S. government is providing resources to support Afghanistan's people and government as they establish a more secure, moderate, just, and lasting state; and to demonstrate the U.S. commitment and strengthen the partnership between Afghanistan and the United States.

Individual, specific discussions between potential applicants and U.S. government officials are not permitted under the regulations governing RFPs once the RFP has been published. General questions about this RFP and the expectations therein may be posed to PAS Kabul via e-mail. Send questions to M. Y. Roshan, Senior Traditional Engagements Officer, Embassy Kabul, Public Affairs Section, at: [RoshanMY@state.gov](mailto:RoshanMY@state.gov).

It is suggested and recommended that the applicant discuss their project ideas with MoHRA before submitting a proposal. The designated point of contact for project inquiries at MoHRA is Mr. Sharifi, Director of Administration, Cell Phone No 0700024072. Such discussions should take place before the submission of the applicant's proposal and a summary of the discussions should be submitted with the proposal. If applicants have any difficulties in communicating with

MoHRA, they should not hesitate to contact M.Y. Roshan at [RoshanMY@state.gov](mailto:RoshanMY@state.gov) so that he can assist.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

The institutional strength of MoHRA is key to long-term stability and development in Afghanistan. MoHRA is a vitally important Ministry in the effort to build closer connections and trust between the Afghan people and their elected government.

A more efficient, more effective MoHRA will empower and enhance credible voices advocating against extremist violence, build the status of and trust in Afghanistan's elected government, encourage partnership with the international community, and increase Afghans access to compelling information promoting security, good governance, and national solidarity and development.

### **Project Objectives**

The program of capacity building should be designed to enhance MoHRA's abilities in the following areas:

- **Spreading messages of moderation and tolerance to counter insurgent rhetoric**, expanding connections and engagement with religious leaders throughout Afghanistan, working together to highlight international shared values.
- **Promoting positive relationships** with religious leaders, demonstrating the positive accomplishments of the elected Afghan government and the international community in the recovery and reconstruction of Afghanistan.
- **Organizing local and regional seminars** to discuss contemporary social issues.
- **Sponsoring intercultural exchanges and education** as opportunities for Afghans to experience the interplay between religion and society in various countries worldwide.
- **Coordinating and facilitating partnerships** with Coalition partner nations, particularly those with a shared religious heritage.

### **Scope of Award**

The purpose of this program is to improve the functional capacity of MoHRA to carry out its mandate. Three components have been identified as priorities in pursuing this objective.

#### **Component 1: Human Resources Capacity Development Training**

To develop the capacity and performance standards of MoHRA staff, the Recipient is expected to prepare and organize structured and specific training courses in various subjects, to include, but not limited to: financial and administrative management, proposal writing, computer skills, and English language. Participants will be selected from MoHRA staff in Kabul and in the provinces. Classes will be scheduled in consultation with MoHRA senior officials. The goal of

this activity is to improve the knowledge, operational skills, effectiveness, and productivity of the Ministry staff.

The Recipient will be responsible for the overall management and coordination and the institutional arrangements required for a successful implementation of the foreseen training activities. Specifically, the Recipient will be responsible for evaluating the current level skill level of selected officials, preparation of a work plan, preparation of a tailored made training curriculum, and adherence to the highest applicable standards, ensuring full satisfaction of beneficiaries, MoHRA, and PAS Kabul.

After the delivery of training, participants shall evaluate the training delivered and incorporate the feedback into future activities. At the successful conclusion of training, participants will receive a certificate -- evidence of the capabilities and skills acquired and active participation.

### **Component 2: Advisory Assistance**

MoHRA senior management is in need of three advisors who can assist the Minister and his two deputies -- technical and administrative -- in their relevant duties. The advisors for the Minister and the Technical Deputy must be religious scholars who can build the ministry's capacity, fostering religious tolerance and moderation. The third advisor must be a skilled administrator with an MBA or similar educational background. The first two advisors should speak Dari, Pashto, and be familiar with English and Arabic. They may be asked to prepare materials and publications for MoHRA distribution countrywide, particularly at MoHRA organized seminars and events.

The Recipient will be responsible for advertising the advisor positions and recruiting candidates, to include arranging interviews with representatives from the Recipient organization, MoHRA, and PAS Kabul. The Recipient will monitor the performance of the advisors over the period of the agreement, which will be one year. The candidates will be hired on a probationary basis and will be required to satisfactorily perform their duties or within the first 45 days of the contract

### **Component 3: Office Space Renovation**

The existing MoHRA office space in Shari-Now, Kabul does not meet the common and acceptable standards for the proper functioning of a key government institution. The renovation and refurbishment of the current office space is a priority in the capacity development package. The Recipient should plan to complete infrastructure and office renovations within three months from the date of the award. The Recipient's responsibilities will include the renovation of available space, to include the replacement of doors and windows, an upgrade of electric and ventilation systems, masonry repair and painting, and other work deemed necessary, plus the procurement and installation of office furniture and equipment.

Potential recipients must conduct a site visit to inspect the MoHRA premises (close to Police County/Area#10 in Shari-Now) and take appropriate measures/notes for the provision of an adequate design and bid proposal.

**Recipient and PAS Kabul Responsibilities:** Following close initial consultations with PAS Kabul, the Recipient will begin meetings with MoHRA senior management with the goal of drafting a work plan based on the Ministry's needs and priorities for capacity development. The

Recipient shall be required to seek input and approval from PAS Kabul before all major decisions.

*Recipient Responsibilities:*

- Develop with MoHRA the work plan for capacity building, which must include defined activities and benchmarks.
- Provide on-site supervision and management, at MoHRA, of the capacity development program of work.
- Provide all financial and logistical support necessary to achieve work plan goals, including engaging all necessary staff and procuring all needed supplies and services.
- Coordinate with assigned PAS Kabul staff regarding all aspects of the project.
- Submit monthly, quarterly, and final, programmatic and financial reports to PAS Kabul

*PAS Kabul Responsibilities:*

- Approve all work plans and schedules.
- Suggest program changes at any stage when necessary.

**Afghan First:** The Recipient shall attempt to hire Afghan companies and consultants. Only after no acceptable Afghan firms are found, may an international firm may be used. The Recipient shall submit the steps taken to work with Afghan entities and document why this was not possible.

**Sub-grantees and Partners:** The Recipient will have the option of soliciting proposals/bids from appropriate Afghan sources in each of these components. Proposals to be funded will be chosen in coordination with PAS Kabul, and judged on the following basis:

- Past performance of similar work
- Capabilities and experience of the program management staff
- Potential effectiveness with local cultural sensitivities
- Cost

**Core Staff Requirements:** The Recipient shall be responsible for determining the core staff and mix of skill sets to meet the needs of this cooperative agreement. The Recipient shall arrange for all technical staff, translators, production, and other staff necessary to accomplish the program without reliance upon PAS Kabul staff. If the Recipient does not possess the technical staff it requires, then it must seek out and hire its own consultants. Specifically, PAS Kabul expects at least one (1) financial and administrative (F&A) manager will be required as supplemental staff. The F&A manager will be based at the Recipient's office and will direct the day-to-day activities of the project, often in coordination with PAS Kabul.

**Responsibility of the Recipient for Logistics in Afghanistan:** The Recipient is fully responsible for providing all office space, housing, meals, and personal security, medical and other logistical support for their staff. The Recipient is responsible for all needed transportation to and in Afghanistan. The Recipient shall furnish a contact list of their staff with names, position held, email, office and cell phone in conjunction with regular reporting.

### **III. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Eligibility is limited to:

- Nonprofits that do not have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, that are an NGO/PVO headquartered in Afghanistan.
- Commercial firms headquartered in Afghanistan – profit is not allowed under any grant award issued by US Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section.

Applicants are not required to include funding from other donors. However, applications that include additional in-kind and/or cash contributions from non-U.S. government sources will be more competitive, since cost-sharing demonstrates a strong commitment to the planned activities and will be considered to show greater cost effectiveness.

### **IV. AWARD INFORMATION**

**Type of Award:** Cooperative Agreement

**Fiscal Year Funds:** 2011

**Approximate Number of Awards:** 1

**Anticipated Award Date:** Pending availability of funds, June 1, 2011

### **APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

#### **Application Submission Process**

Proposals should be submitted via email to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul at the following email address: [kabulpdproposals@state.gov](mailto:kabulpdproposals@state.gov). Applications are accepted in English only, and final grant agreements will be concluded in English.

**Application Deadline:** All applications must be submitted on or before **May 17, 2011**, 11:59 p.m. in Kabul, Afghanistan. Applications submitted after 11:59 p.m. will be ineligible for consideration. **Begin the application process early**, as this will allow time to address any technical difficulties that may arise in advance of the deadline. There will be no exceptions to this application deadline.

**Application Content:** Applicants must follow the RFP instructions and conditions contained herein and supply all information required. **Failure to furnish all information or comply with stated requirements will result in disqualification from the competition.** Applicants must set forth full, accurate, and complete information as required by this RFGP. The penalty for making false statements in proposals to the USG is prescribed on 18 U.S.C.1001.

**The proposal must consist of the following:**

**Section 1 – Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424):**

This form can be found online at: [http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aapproved\\_standard\\_forms.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aapproved_standard_forms.jsp) or [http://fa.statebuy.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=20&menu\\_id=68](http://fa.statebuy.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=20&menu_id=68)

**Section 2 – Executive Summary/Problem Statement:**

The executive summary should be a maximum two-page overview of what the applicant believes best represents the key features of its proposed program. It must provide a summary of the identified need, a brief description of the overall program strategic approach, proposed activities, expected results as linked to the monitoring and evaluation plan, and the level of funding requested.

Applicants are also encouraged to complete the US Embassy Kabul “Suggested Application Format.” This form can be found online at: [http://kabul.usembassy.gov/call\\_for\\_proposals.html](http://kabul.usembassy.gov/call_for_proposals.html)

**Section 3 – Project Goals/Implementation Plan:**

The applicant must specify the goals and objectives of the project, relative to the problem statement. The proposed activities should be described in sufficient detail to show how objectives and goals will be met. This section should also describe how success will be measured via performance indicators and a specified monitoring and evaluation plan. Finally, this section must include a time-task plan that clearly identifies the objectives and major activities.

**Section 4 – Organizational Capacity:**

The purpose of this section is to provide PAS Kabul with an understanding of the applicant's capacity to implement the program. Applications must include a clear description of the applicant's management structure and organization experience and background in Afghanistan. The description should include information on the logistical strengths of the organization in Afghanistan, i.e. offices, vehicles, infrastructure, security, etc. Besides information about the organization as a whole, this section must also identify the proposed management structure and staffing plan for the proposed project. A description of the management structure that includes: 1) an organizational chart with the proposed key staff; and, 2) roles, responsibilities, and authorities of key personnel.

**Section 5 – Appendices (Required):**

The proposal submission must include three appendices. Only the appendices listed below may be included as part of the application:

- A. **Budget (Required)** – the budget must identify the total amount of funding requested, with a breakdown of amounts to be spent in the following budget categories: personnel; fringe benefits; travel; equipment; supplies; consultants/contracts; other direct costs; and indirect costs.
- B. **Resumes (Required)** – a resume, not to exceed 1 page in length, must be included for all proposed key staff persons. If an individual for a specific position has not been identified, the applicant may submit a 1-page position description, identifying the qualifications and skills required for that position, in lieu of a resume. Position



descriptions for all three advisors to be recruited under this RFP must also be included.

- C. **Letters of Intent (Required)** – Letters of intent from all partners should be included with the application. The letters must identify the type of relationship to be entered into (formal or informal), the roles and responsibilities of each partner in relation to the proposed project activities, and the expected result of the partnership. Please note that these are not letters of support, and should only be included for those organizations that will play an active role in the project, including those that receive financial support through the project budget. The individual letters cannot exceed 1 page in length, and applicants are limited to submitting up to five letters per proposal.

## V. AWARD SELECTION CRITERIA

Applicants should note that the following criteria (1) serve as a standard against which all proposals will be evaluated, and (2) serve to identify the significant matters that should be addressed in all proposals. The U.S. government will award grants to the applicant whose offer represents the best value to the U.S. government on the basis of technical merit and cost.

Each application will be evaluated by a peer review committee of Department of State and other experts, as deemed appropriate. The evaluation criteria have been tailored to the requirements of this RFP.

- A. **Technical approach and methodology (30 points):** This criterion is intended to measure both the technical approach and methodology needed to execute the program components, including human resources capacity development, qualifications of the proposed advisors, and the prospected vision for the institutional renovation and refurbishments of at MoHRA.
- B. **Organizational approach and methodology (30 points):** This criterion is intended to measure the organizational approach and methodology of the applicant, as well as accounting for any sub-partners that the applicant may propose to enlist. Provide an overall summary of the organization and structure and key principles, owners and executives. Provide a detailed staffing plan for this specific solicitation that includes identification of all staff and/or sub-consultants, proposed as member of the project team, and the duties, responsibilities, and concentration of effort that apply to each as well as resumes, curricula vitae, or statements of prior experience, qualifications and references.
- C. **Demonstrated experience and accomplishments programming applicable activities in Afghanistan (15 points):** This criterion is intended to assess the demonstrated experience, understanding, and accomplishment of the applicant in Afghanistan, including applicant's capacity to mobilize quickly and effectively.
- D. **Appendices (25 points):**
- **Budget:** Costs shall be evaluated for realism, control practices, and efficient. The Department of State must determine that the costs paid for this award are

reasonable, allowable, and allocable to the proposed project activities. This will consist of a review of the budget to determine if the overall costs are realistic for the work to be performed and if the costs are consistent with the program narrative.

- **Resumes:** The review panel will consider the appropriateness of the selected project director and other key personnel; in view of the roles and responsibilities these persons will play in guiding the project through implementation to completion. Position descriptions submitted in lieu of resumes will be reviewed for the appropriateness of the qualifications and skills identified.
- **Letters of Intent:** The review panel will consider the types and depth of relationships that the applicant has with local organizations. The panel will also review the letters to determine the willingness of such organizations to participate in the effort, and that all parties have an understanding of their unique roles and responsibilities in terms of the proposed project.

## **VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

**Award Notices:** The cooperative agreement award shall be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The Grants Officer is the U.S. government official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State Procurement Executive to write, award, and administer grants and cooperative agreements. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the Recipient in person or via mail transmission. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified in writing.

**Anticipated Time to Award:** Applicants should expect to be notified no later than May 30, 2011, with an anticipated award prior to May 30, 2011.

Issuance of this RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

**Reporting Requirements:** Grantees are required to submit monthly program progress reports throughout the project period. Such reports must include information on:

1. overall status of the project;
2. actions taken to complete the project;
3. positive results of the effort;
4. pictures, if applicable;
5. Afghan partners utilized and contact information; and,
6. lessons learned and recommendations for future indicators of progress.

In addition to the monthly reports mentioned above, the Recipient will be required to submit quarterly financial reports. Quarterly financial reports are due 30 days after the end of the calendar year quarter (quarter 1: January-March, quarter 2: April-June, quarter 3: July-September, quarter 4: October-December).

Final programmatic and financial reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period. Progress reports at a minimum should be submitted via electronic mail to an address to be provided in the award.

## **VII. DISCLAIMER**

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with the award. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of the Department of State.